

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF PUERTO RICO**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
Plaintiff,

v.

MADDEN LAI
Defendant.

CRIMINAL NO. 25 -095 (MAJ)

SENTENCING MEMORANDUM

THE HONORABLE MARIA ANTONGIORGI-JORDAN
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE
FOR THE DISTRICT OF PUERTO RICO

COMES NOW, Mr. Madden Lai, (herein Mr. Lai) represented by the Federal Public Defender for the District of Puerto Rico, and before this Honorable Court respectfully STATES and PRAYS as follows:

I. INTRODUCTION.

On February 25, 2025, Mr. Lai entered a guilty plea to count one of the Information filed in the case. That count charged him with Transporting a Firearm Without Notice to the Carrier in violation of 18 USC s 922(c). A pre-sentence investigation interview was conducted with Mr. Lai on April 4, 2025. The interview was conducted by Sandra Velez of the United States Probation Department. A Presentence Investigation Report was filed on April 22, 2025. Sentencing has been set for May 29, 2025.

Mr. Lai is respectfully asking the court to impose a jointly recommended sentence

of one year of probation. This recommendation is based on Madden's lack of criminal history, good performance on pretrial release, job skills and work experience, his strong family support, his youth and vulnerability, and the unique factual circumstances of the case,

It is important to note that Madden's criminal activity in this case took place because of immaturity and impatience more than criminal intent. He maintains he feels bad about his decision to board the plane without notifying the airline carrier that he had parts of a firearm and ammunition in his luggage. He had no intention of assembling the firearm while the plane he was on was in flight nor was he in a position to do so. He is anxious to succeed on probation so he can continue working, support his partner and the baby they are expecting.

Given these circumstances the defense respectfully submits that a sentence of one year of probation would be fair and just and result in a sentence that meets the desired principles of 18 U.S.C. s 3553.

II. IMPORTANT THINGS TO CONSIDER ABOUT MADDEN LAI.

History and Characteristics of the Offender.

**"Our Success is not in Never Falling, but in Rising Every Time We Fall."
Confucius**

A. Madden Broke the Law Out of Immaturity and Impatience.

Madden has never been in trouble before this case. He was raised in a stable home. He is close to his mother, stepfather and sister. He was a good student. He served in the Navy before getting a medical discharge due to his inability to maintain weight and failing health. He has advanced technical training in several fields and has earned a good income

for many years. He was licensed to carry firearms and only had one for protection given his small size and stature. At the time he was charged in the case before the court he put parts of a firearm and ammunition in his baggage without given notice to the airline because he didn't want his firearm to be stolen, he didn't want to be delayed boarding the plane, didn't want the hassle of dealing with red tape and didn't understand the harm he was causing by ignoring the rules. He understands the irony of his loss; through forfeiture, of the firearm he sought to prevent being stolen. He does not want the court to think he sees himself as above the law. He realizes he needs to act more responsibly in the future since he will have a wife and child depending on him. Madden has learned a valuable lesson. The court does not need to send him to jail to ensure he doesn't make a similar mistake in the future.

B. Madden's Family is at the Center of His Life. He Has a Very Strong Support Network

Madden's family is the most important thing in his life. He has great respect for his mother Kate Luang, and the things she has accomplished in her life. He knows that her life has not been easy since she had him when she was young, and his father has been out of the picture since Madden was five years old. He is also very close to his sister, Trish. He considers her to be someone he trusts and can count on for support. His family has high expectations of Madden. He plans to meet those expectations in the future.

Madden's most important relationship is with his partner, Erika Hernandez-Rivera. They met almost two years ago. Madden moved to Puerto Rico to be with her as she finishes nursing school despite the hardships that are presented in terms of his work. They are expecting their first child in August and plan to marry in the future. Madden looks forward to being a good partner and father. The importance of his family provides strong

motivation for Madden to successfully complete a probationary term if the court gives him that opportunity.

Erika describes Madden as being loving and respectful. She plans to move to the United States with him once she finishes school. She will continue to support him while he serves whatever sentence the court imposes. Having support and goals help make it certain that Madden will not repeat the kind of mistake he made in this case.

C. Madden Has Good Work Skills and a Good Work History.

Madden finished high school in 2021. He learned to repair jet engines while enlisted in the Navy. Later he got a degree from a technical school in Kansas to make general repairs on a variety of aircraft. He also has significant experience repairing and installing cell phone towers for the ITC Company. While he was last employed, he earned \$4,000 a month. His previous job at a warehouse paid him \$16 per hour. Madden is a hard worker who looks forward to getting his job at ITC back again. He will be in a good position to support himself and his family.

D. Madden Has Done Well on Pretrial Supervision.

Madison has been under pretrial supervision for several months while living with his partner in Cabo Rojo. He has reported on a regular basis and met all the other conditions that were imposed. He viewed his release as an opportunity to show the court he was conscientious and responsible. He wanted to show the court he can follow any requirements the court might impose as conditions of probation. Although his living conditions have been more complicated because he has been temporarily out of work, he has used the time to help his partner and get to know her family better.

E. Madden is Young and Vulnerable.

Madden is twenty-one years old. He is 5'7 and weighs about 100 lbs. He is small in size and not aggressive. Although he has some training from the Navy, he was literally too small to complete his appointment and was medically discharged. Youth and vulnerability have been recognized as reasons for lesser sentences. We urge the court to consider these as reasons to follow the joint recommendation in this case.

F. The Circumstances of the case.

Madden accepts responsibility for his actions. He understands that his decision to take a short cut at the airport has cost him dearly. In addition to temporarily losing his job and the financial hardship that has caused him and his family, he has also lost his ability to travel and the firearm he was trying to keep from getting stolen. At the very least he will need to continue reporting to probation for another year. He also knows now that he has a criminal record, he will need to be even more careful in the future. Madden has learned his lesson the hard way. He will not repeat the mistake he made.

WHEREFORE it is respectfully requested that this Honorable Court consider the information provided in this Sentencing Memorandum submitted by Mr. Lai and impose the jointly recommended sentence of one year of probation.

I HEREBY CERTIFY that on this date, I electronically filed the foregoing with the Clerk of the Court using the CM/ECF System, which will send electronic notification of such filing to the parties of record.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED.

In San Juan, Puerto Rico, this 21st day of May 2025.

**RACHEL BRILL
Federal Public Defender
District of Puerto Rico**

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